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Outspoken Young Again

BEFORE the Senate leadership dropped its effort to get a Soviet consular treaty approved this year—lest it precipitate a long and controversial debate that would delay adjournment of Congress—Sen. Stephen M. Young was given another opportunity to demonstrate his most distinguishing political trait.

This is, to borrow the phrase from one of his speeches, his exceptional ability "to state the matter bluntly."

Chief opposition to letting the Soviets open consular offices in this country—with the United States doing the same in Russia—comes from those who are afraid the reciprocal arrangement would plant more Communists as secret agents amongst us.

"Spies," Senator Young bluntly calls them.

But whether the senators who would delay or block the consular treaty are more afraid of spies or the sensitiveness of American opinion is problematical.

FOR SO LONG before the United States became the dominant world power, playing power politics to the hilt, Americans were, by and large, the most naive of peoples in foreign affairs.

Everything, they thought, ought to be moral. Since spying wasn't, they wanted no part of it.

This attitude, which still prevails in many quarters, may account in part for the decision of the Senate leadership to avoid a long and controversial debate on the subject at this session.

It certainly is the reason why timid senators—who know better themselves, or should—will fight this consular exchange, which President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk are advocating.

FAR FROM truckling to uninformed or misinformed public opinion, however, Senator Young has made it his practice "to state the matter bluntly" in controversies of this kind.

Evidently he believes that if the American people are fully acquainted with the facts in a given situation the great majority will face up to them.

And what are the facts about this spy scare that threatens to block a treaty which could be of great advantage to American tourists and businessmen and might help ease world tensions?

Mincing no words, Ohio's outspoken senator sums them up in one, two, three order:

► It is a fact that in all of our embassies overseas we have CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) operatives, or spies, who are on the embassy staffs.

► Of course, the Soviet Embassy in Washington also is staffed with spies who are listed as officials of the embassy.

► Unfortunately, this is a fact of life in the cold war, and we can play the game as well as any.